



# Department of Justice

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## **CENTERVILLE BUSINESSMAN PLEADS GUILTY TO EMPLOYING AND HARBORING ILLEGAL ALIENS**

*Owner of Stitching Post appears in federal court*

DAY TON – The owner of a Centerville store that sells and repairs sewing machines and related items pled guilty in United States District Court here today to a four-count information charging him with crimes related to the employment of illegal aliens. Joseph Edward Fulmer, who owns the Stitching Post, pled guilty to one count each of encouraging and inducing illegal aliens to come to the United States, harboring illegal aliens, fraud and misuse of government documents, and engaging in a pattern of employing illegal aliens.

Gregory G. Lockhart, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Ohio and Brian M. Moskowitz, special agent-in-charge of the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Office of Investigations in Detroit, announced the plea entered today before Senior United States District Judge Walter H. Rice.

According to a statement of facts filed with Fulmer's plea, Fulmer, age 46, began making regular trips from the United States to Mexico in March 2002 and approached Mexican nationals about working for him. He agreed to pay for at least four illegal aliens to travel from Texas to Dayton where he picked them up at the bus station and took them to his home. In March 2007, Fulmer took three illegal aliens on a Caribbean cruise knowing that at least one of them possessed and used fake identification documents to get back in the United States.

"All employers, large or small, will be held accountable if they violate U.S. immigration laws," Lockhart said. "Fraudulent use of U.S. identification documents can undermine our security efforts."

Fraud and misuse of government documents carries a maximum punishment of ten years imprisonment and a fine of up to \$250,000. The charges of inducing illegal aliens to come to the United States and of harboring illegal aliens each carry a maximum penalty of five years imprisonment and a fine of \$250,000. Engaging in a practice of employing illegal aliens is a misdemeanor which carries a maximum possible punishment of six months imprisonment.

Fulmer also agreed to forfeit all real and personal property used to commit the crimes, which include his house in Centerville and \$2,693 in currency. Judge Rice set Fulmer's sentencing for July 9 at 3 p.m.

Lockhart commended the investigation conducted by ICE agents and Assistant U.S. Attorney Laura Clemmens, who is prosecuting the case.

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